

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 NASA-04 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 L-03

MC-02 DODE-00 GAC-01 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 EB-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-12 MBFR-03 SAJ-01

USIA-12 PA-03 PRS-01 COME-00 NSF-04 RSR-01 OPR-02

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9662

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA, FR, XT

SUBJECT: ABANDONEMENT OF EUROPA-2 LAUNCHER

REFERENCE THE HAGUE 1636

PASS NASA

1. SUMMARY: APRIL 27 MEETING ELDO COUNCIL ORDERED TERMINATION ALL WORK ON EUROPA 2 LAUNCHER WHICH SEALS FATE OF ELDO ORGANIZATION. FRENCH PRESS EXTREAMELY CRITICAL OF CONDUCT OF PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

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2. COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING APRIL 27 MEETING ELDO COUNCIL ANNOUNCED FRENCH AND GERMAN DELEGATIONS DECIDED TO CEASE SUPPORT FOR EUROPA - 2 PROGRAM AS OF MAY 1. IN VIEW THIS DECISION, COUNCIL AGREED PROGRAM COULD NOT BE CONTINUED, AND IT INSTRUCTED ELDO SECRETARIAT TO INFORM CONTRACTORS AND TO PROPOSE TO COUNCIL MEANS FOR TERMINATION OF PROGRAM AND EMPLOYMENT OF ELDO PERSONNEL.

3. PARIS DAILY LE MONDE REPORTS FRENCH DELEGATION LATER STATED THAT IT HAD ACCEPTED THE GERMAN PROPOSAL TO TERMINATE FURTHER WORK ON EUROPA-2 IN EFFORT PRESERVE EUROPEAN SPACE UNITY. FRENCH STATEMENT DENIES DECISION IS END OF A EUROPEAN LAUNCHER POLICY AND CLAIMS FAVORABLE RECEPTION IN MOST EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF FRENCH PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF L3 S LAUNCHER. STATEMENT ENDS WITH ASSURANCE THAT APRIL 17 CHARBONNEL- EHMKE CONVERSATIONS MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN DETERMINING FRANCO- GERMAN COST SHARING FOR BOTH L3 S PROGRAM AND POST- APOLLO SPACELAB.

4. SCATHING FRONT- PAGE LE MONDE EDITORIAL, TITLED 3.5 BILLION FRANCS UP IN SMOKE, TRACES HISTORY ELDO FAILURES, CITES WISDOM OF U. K.'S 1969 WITHDRAWAL, CHARACTERIZES PROJECT AS PITIFUL FAILURE FOR A CONTINENT WHICH VAUNTS ITSELF AS CENTER OF THOUGHT AND SCIENCE, AND WHOSE ECONOMIC STRENGTH RANKS WITH THE LARGEST. EDITORIAL DESCRIBES ABANDONMENT AS END OF FRENCH DREAM OF EUROPEAN INDEPENDENCE FROM U. S. LAUNCHERS. IT NOTES THAT FRENCH GUIANA BASE MUST NOT BE MAINTAINED AT HIGH COST TO LAUNCH ONLY THREE SATELLITES BETWEEN 1973 AND 1977, AND THAT L3 S CAN NOT BE READY UNTIL 1980.

5. LESS EMOTIONAL LE MONDE ARTICLE BY FRENCH JOURNALIST VERGUESE NOTES ELDO COMMUNIQUE DOES NOT CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFER OF 300 REMAINING ELDO PERSONNEL TO L3 S PROJECT, TO ESRO, OR TO SINGLE SPACE AGENCY WHICH EUROPEAN SPACE MINISTERS DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE TO CREATE. VERGUESE REPORTS THAT CONTINUING FRANCO- GERMAN DISCUSSIONS OVER PAST TWO WEEKS HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY FINANCIAL AND ARE POINTING TOWARD GERMAN COMMITMENT TO L3 S FOR 9 YEARS AT RATE RECOMPUTED ANNUALLY, IN EXCHANGE FOR ABOUT 10 PERCENT CONTRIBUTION TO POST- APOLLO SPACELAB.

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6. COMMENT: ELDO DECISION TO END TROUBLE- PLAGUED DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPA-2 LAUNCHER SURPRISED NO ONE. EXPANDING SOMEWHAT ON FRENCH STATEMENT PARA 3, LOUET, CHARBONNEL'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

ADVISOR ON

SPACE MATTERS TOLD SCIENCE COUNSELOR THAT POST- APOLLO SPACE-LAB TECHNOLOGY HAS LITTLE INTEREST FOR FRANCE, BUT SAID THAT EUROPEANS HAVE BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT FRENCH L3 S LAUNCHER PROPOSALS. LATTER STATEMENT CONFLICTS WITH INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES, INCLUDING REFTEL, TO EFFECT THAT CNES MISSIONS TO EUROPEAN CAPITALS TO EXPLAIN L3 S HAVE BEEN COOLY RECEIVED. EMBASSY WILL SEEK FURTHER COMMENT, HOWEVER FRENCH SPOKESMAN ARE OFTEN EITHER BIASED OR RETICENT ON ISSUES WHICH FOR THEM ARE SO EMOTIONALLY CHARGED.

7. LE MONDE' S CRITICISM OF EUROPE' S LAMENTABLE PERFORMANCE ON THIS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROJECT IS HARD BUT PROBABLY JUSTIFIED. FROM ITS INCEPTION EUROPA- PROGRAM WAS PLAGUED BY DECISION THAT MAJOR MEMBER COUNTRIES WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE SEPARATELY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE SEVERAL VEHICLE STAGES AND MAJOR COMPONENTS, MANAGENENT OF PROGRAM WAS FURTHER HAMPERED BY PROVISION THAT CONTRACTS BE APPORTIONED TO INDUSTRY ON BASIS ON NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ELDO. ALTHOUGH THESE ERRORS MIGHT NOT BE MADE AGAIN, EUROPA-2 PROJECT WAS SO EXPENSIVE IN TIME AND MONEY THAT LITTLE ENTHUSIASM REMAINS FOR FRENCH PROPOSAL TO BUILD REPEAT PROPOSAL TO BUILD THE L3 S AN EVEN LARGER AND MORE EXPENSIVE VEHICLE.
IRWIN

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